What's Inside

Victory on 1171 Sansome
Summer Cocktail Party
(see insert)
Meet Your Neighbor
Greenwich St. Gardens

August 1984
No. 88

TELEGRAPH HILL SEMAPHORE

Publication of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers

President's Message

The disappearance of neighborhood-serving businesses in North Beach should be of great concern to those of us who live on the hills surrounding it.

In an effort to keep neighborhood-serving businesses in North Beach, the Telegraph Hill Dwellers has endeavored to halt the spread of financial institutions, because they force up rents and squeeze out small businesses. We have lobbied to stop conversions of residential units (usually low-cost housing) to commercial use. Our goal here is to ensure that North Beach is a neighborhood where people of all economic levels can live and find the services that support our daily lives. We need Elmer, the shoe repair man, Iacopi, the butcher, Franco, at Malvina's, Rossi's Market, as well as the restaurants, delis, drug stores, and hardware stores.

The city Planning Department has finally come up with special zoning for North Beach, a Neighborhood Commercial Use District. We've contributed much to the process, and we feel the tighter controls will help keep the services we need close at hand. The Department presented the proposed zoning at a THD–sponsored community meeting last month.

Each of you can "vote with your feet" to keep services available to us in North Beach: shop here whenever possible. Patronize our local merchants!

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MEMBERS: Please call these chairs and volunteer to serve today!

1171 Sansome Loses at Planning Commission

In a truly unprecedented move, the Planning Commission on July 27th overturned its previous approval (6-1) of the proposed development at 1171 Sansome and ruled against the plan by a 4-3 vote. Citing concern for public safety, the commission reversed its earlier decision when it was presented with extensive conditions on the permit. These included that the developer carry $25,000,000 in insurance and that he defend the Planning Commission if it were sued for damages on account of the construction of the project.

The proposed conditions raised enough questions in the minds of the commissioners about the safety of the project that they postponed final approval until meeting in a closed door session with representatives of the city's risk management group, planning department, city attorney's office, and building department. The information that the commissioners received at that meeting, together with voluminous testimony from neighbors and the geological expert hired by THD, apparently convinced three of the commissioners to change their votes on the basis of risk to public safety.

The neighborhood group that worked on the project came to the conclusion that the extraordinary risks created by an 80-foot deep escavation (largest ever for the cliffs) would require extraordinary protection for the adjacent property, the neighbors, and the city. Thus, the group urged that insurance requirements and provision for the defense of the Planning Commission be included in the permit.

The Dwellers and neighbors who opposed the project had varying reasons for their opposition, ranging from height, bulk, parking,

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view blockage, incursion into a proposed landmark, disruption of an avian nesting area, and destruction of a botanical species. Nevertheless, all were united against the development as a geological hazard.

We have probably not heard the end of 1171 Sansome. Between the time this is written and the *Semaphore* is received in your mail, the developer may well have applied to the Board of Permit Appeals for relief. A victory has been scored, but the end of the struggle against unwarranted development is not over.

Help Wanted at Coit Tower!

The Friends of Recreation & Parks are looking for volunteers to staff the Host/Tour Guide Desk at Coit Tower. Volunteers will offer tourists information on the tower's history and answer any questions about things to do in San Francisco. If you enjoy meeting and being with people, this is for you. A brief evening training program consisting of three workshops will provide volunteers with the necessary background.

If interested, call Laura Mayer at the Coit Tower Shop, 982-COIT, or Jane Otto at the Friends' Office, 221-1310.

DUES

To the 78% of our membership who paid their dues after only one request, we say many thanks. To the remaining 22% we say

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or you will not receive the next issue of the *Semaphore*.

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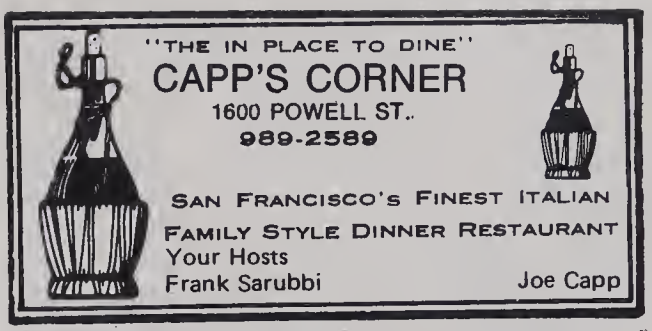

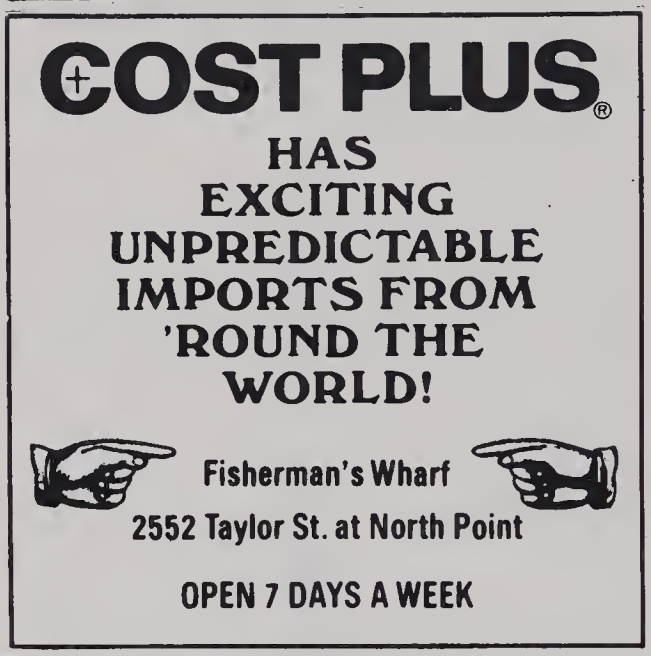

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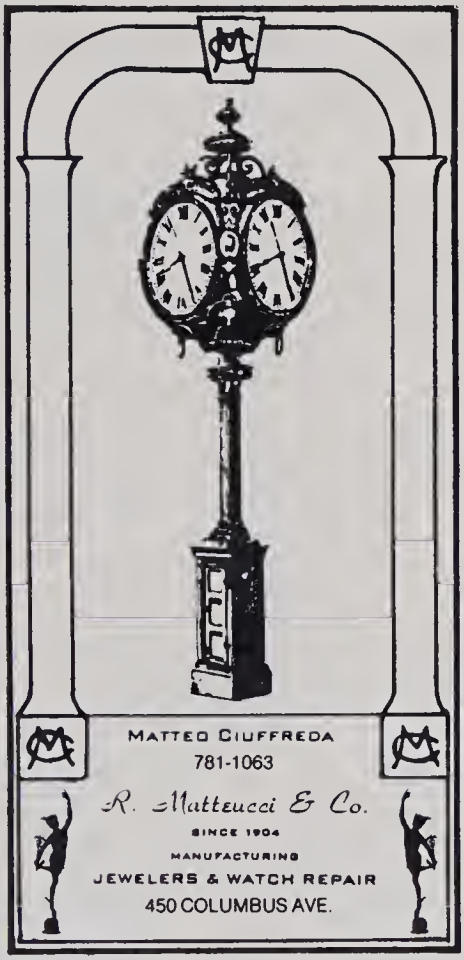

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Prosciutto Wrapped Around Asparagus

Mix together 8 oz creme fraiche with 1–2 Tbs. dijon mustard. Trim and blanch 50 asparagus spears, by cooking 8–10 minutes in boiling water and refreshing carefully under cold water, and draining on paper towels. Slice or have the butcher slice very thinly 50 slices of prosciutto.

To assemble, paint each slice of prosciutto with the mustard mixture and wrap around a stalk of asparagus, so that the tip shows. Arrange in spoke fashion on a serving plate and chill until ready to serve. Makes 50 hors d'oeuvres.

Roast Beef Wrapped Around Watercress

Mix together 8 oz. sweet butter with 1-2 [illegible]s. dijon mustard. Wash and dry 4 bunches fresh watercress. Slice or have the butcher slice very thinly 50 slices of rare roast beef.

To assemble, paint each slice of beef with the butter mixture and wrap around a piece of watercress, so that the pretty leaves show. Chill until ready to serve. Makes 50 hors d'oeuvres.

Note: To make an imitation creme fraiche, place in a glass container 1½ cups good quality heavy cream with 1 Tbs. buttermilk. Leave in a warm place for about 24 hours, until set; then chill.

The Changing Arts at Intersection

Are you curious abuot the state of art in North Beach in this most heralded year of 1984? Intersection for the Arts (located in a former Methodist church at 756 Union St.) is proud to announce the opening of new displays in its expanded gallery. These new exhibits may satisfy your curiosity, provide an evening's entertainment, and, as they used to say in the 70s, expand your consciousness.

Avant-garde theatre is not new here and, in fact, has been flowering for over twenty years in the heart of North Beach under the sponsorship of Intersection for the Arts. Functioning as a much-needed stage for burgeoning Bay Area performers, writers, poets, and artists, Intersection has evolved from a tiny community center serving local artists to a broad-based arts organization of national repute. In addition to developing and providing a service program that awards grants to artists, Intersection has established three well-known programs: performance, poetry & prose and the visual arts.

This year Intersection has been gifted with a new director, Catherine Spurr. Ms. Spurr's conviction in the vitality of visual arts has lured her to develop the gallery programs. Toward that end, Intersection proudly announces the beginning of an outdoor sculpture series in the garden. Running through October, there will be artworks of Megan Roberts and Raymond Ghirardo (a kinetic piece of inflated tyvek cubes) and Sally Nelson's thematic multimedia piece entitled "Whose Fault" (about the California earthquake country). Coming in August, Dana Chodzko will unveil an indoor piece entitled "Adobe Alter Installation." To accommodate interested viewers, the gallery hours have

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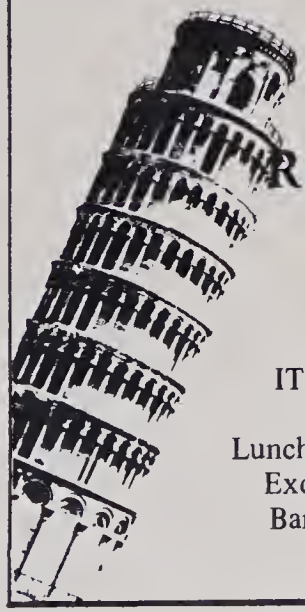
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In the theatre arena, Intersection is beginning the "Artist-in-Residency Series" as part of its performance program, and it will be the site in 1985 for the premiere of A Travelling Jewish Theatre's new work. ATJT will hold open rehearsals in the Fall. Development of the program represents Intersection's increased support of artists' new works in all fields.

Intersection is proud and excited about these changes and wants you to witness the drama of unfolding new art in North Beach. To really see what art is in 1984, Intersection invites you to drop by during gallery hours, attend a performance Thursday through Saturday nights, or experience the prose and poetry readings on Tuesday nights. Intersection also welcomes you to become more involved in the evolution of art in our area by joining their growing membership and volunteer groups, whose efforts are, of course, vital to all three artistic programs. Intersection also welcomes your comments and suggestions on ways they might better serve the Telegraph Hill neighborhood and its artists. Come to art today at the Intersection, 726 Union St., 397-6061. For a schedule, see page 3 of this issue of the *Semaphore*.

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Ghost Writers Wanted

Take Notice Writers: ghostly and renowned writers, diary recorders, all Telegraph Hill scribes and scribblers of all phenomenologies: The namesake day of ghost writers is fast approaching—Halloween. To commemorate this eerie eve, the *Semaphore* boldly *invites ghost stories*—your own chilling experience, the tale of a once fearless friend, or the rehash of a historical howler—*that verifiably took place on (gulp) Telegraph Hill*. If your story (please, no more than 1 double-spaced typewritten page) scares the editor, it will (a) be printed, and (b) you will get to pay her psychiatrist visit (to air the reoccuring nightmares) and/or make the donation for the exorcist. No monkeys' claws, please.

Street Patrol Needs More Walkers

If you like to walk, if you're interested in your neighborhood, join your neighbors in the Street Patrol. The more walkers we have, the more often the Street Patrol will be out.

The Street Patrol consists of groups of 4 or 6 which walk the hill, on several predetermined routes, for several hours in the evenings. The idea, of course, is that our presence deters vandals and criminal activity.

Although the highest percentage of crimes occurs between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m. (29%), according to the Police Department's statistics for 1983, the afternoon hours between noon and 4 p.m. are also a relatively high crime time, with about 16% of the total.

Therefore, the Crime Prevention Committee would like to start Street Patrols during the day if willing walkers can be found.

To sign up for Street Patrol, days or evenings, or to sign up for the committee, call 392-1187.

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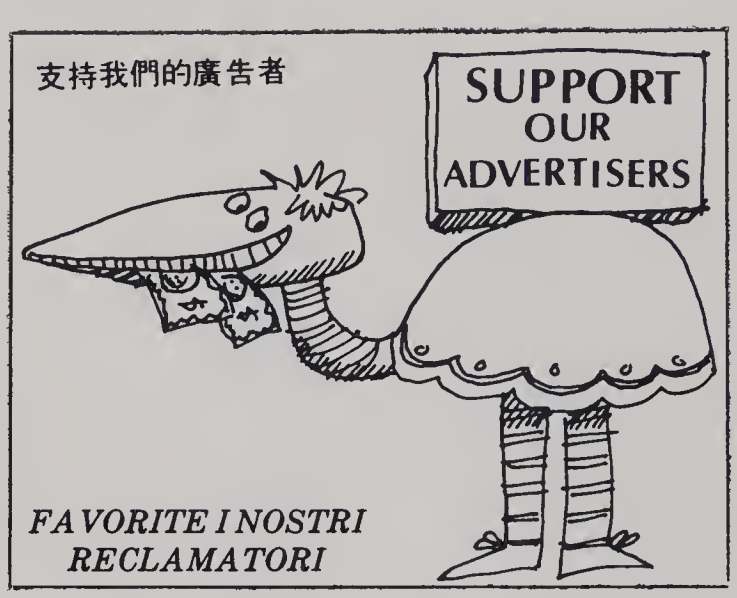
Letter to the Editor:

Dear Editor:

Rather than put an expensive fence around Columbus' statue, why not move him down to Columbus Avenue and Washington Square and move the firemen up closer to their nozzle at Coit Tower? The estimated $5,000 to $7,000 ought to pay for some of that.

—A subscriber



Mystery Spot

The mystery spot that appeared in the last *Semaphore* is a prominent ten-foot diameter frieze located on the facade of St. Peter & Paul. It was selected to honor St. Peter & Paul's 100th anniversary.

There were no successful written entries. When Lawrence Ferlinghetti was shown the *Semaphore*, he recognized the mystery spot immediately, so we'll award him the drink for his poetic sensibility.

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Parks & Gardens

Panoramic view from the Pfeiffer Street Park.

Pfeiffer Park Update

The work on Pfeiffer Park is proceeding. The stairway was rerouted in order to preserve a eucalyptus tree planted by Jack Early. The committee and neighbors of adjoining properties met with the designers and contractors at the summit to determine the exact height of the viewing platform which is the terminus of the stair and walk to the top of the park.

Unfounded rumors to the effect that this platform was to be an observation "tow[illegible] caused some concern among neighbors. After much discussion, the height of this approximately twelve—foot—square platform was established at fourteen inches below the top of an existing concrete wall at the park's southern boundary. Along that boundary line, the platform is only a step above ground level.

Community Gardens

With the assistance of the Trust for Public Land and S.L.U.G. (San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners), North Beach Neighbors has established the Michelangelo Community Garden. The site is on the south side of Greenwich between Jones and Leavenworth and is adjacent to the old Michelangelo Playground.

The 30' x 100' site is leased from its owner, the San Francisco Unified School District. There are 18 plots approximately 8' x 10' each with common areas for flowers, composting, and relaxing. There are 24 gardeners involved with ages ranging from 14 to late 70s. Some gardeners are experienced; some are beginners.

There are many ways to go about securing vacant land for community gardens, whether or not the land is publicly or privately owned. If any Telegraph Hill Dwellers are interested in urban gardening and would like help in organizing one, call Marsha Garland of North Beach Neighbors (and also of THD) at 391-6800/673-3228.

In the meantime, feel free to stop by the Michelangelo Garden to see the beautiful transition of a former weed and debris-strewn lot to a green and thriving garden.

Meet Your Neighbor
Peter Macchiarini

At the age of 15, Peter Macchiarini traveled with his parents to Lucca (Italy) where he studied the art of carving marble, a talent he later put to use when the old Fox theater was constructed on Market Street. (Remember it?) He did much of the architectural ornamentation of that marvelous building. Under the auspices of the WPA in the 1930s, he worked with Bufano and Ralph Chesse. With the latter, he carved and manipulated the marionettes in shows such as *Alice in Wonderland*, *Hansel and Gretel*, and the *Mikado*. These shows were staged usually at the Columbia (on Geary) (since torn down), and once they traveled with a show to Carmel.

It was at this time he also began to make jewelry. Coworkers in the theater discovered his skill when he began showing them the work he carried around in his pockets—they began ordering pins, and thus began a career in custom—made jewelry which, except for his labors at the shipyards during WW II, continues to this day.

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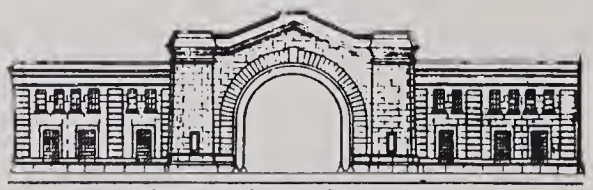

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Peter Macchiarini's first shop was located "upstairs" at 418A Union Street. That was 1936. Since then he's moved five times, but, he emphasized, he's always managed to remain in a three-block radius in North Beach. He works with precious and semi-precious stones and with gold and silver. Self-taught, his jewelry is both unique and beautiful.

Peter Macchiarini is also an organizer. Prior to WW II, he was instrumental in setting up San Francisco's first open air art show. It was held at Montgomery and Washington Streets. (He lived in the "Monkey Building," where the Pyramid is now located.) In 1946 he was on the committee of the first San Francisco Art Festival (Civic Center), where he exhibited his jewelry for 35 years, often winning the top award. In 1954, with six other Grant Avenue artists, Peter Macchiarini organized our street fair, the first of its kind in San Francisco. Now an institution, it has been much imitated elsewhere in the city. Peter Macchiarini has also helped Berkeley and Sausalito with their art festivals.

In 1981 the city of San Francisco presented him with an Art Commission Merit Award, and in the same year the city of Lucca (where his parents were born) awarded him with gold medal, recognizing that a student of one of their art schools had, indeed, made good.

1984 has not been a good year. Peter Macchiarini must move from his present location

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at 1422 Grant Avenue, a location where he has been making and selling his creative jewelry since 1954. Because of legal ramifications, Mr. and Mrs. Macchiarini (they've been married for 35 years and have three grown children) were reluctant to go into details. They hope, however, to find another location in North Beach.

When I expressed dismay about Grant Avenue's increasing loss of individuality—of what made that street a unique part of our community—Peter Macchiarini, age 75, remained philosophical. Born in Santa Rosa, but a resident of San Francisco since 1928, he's seen enormous changes. For sure. His third jewelry shop was on the Kearny Street steps.

THD hopes the Macchiarinis can remain in North Beach for their contributions have been real. Do we ever have too many creative, energetic people amongst us?

John D. Dolan

Neighborhood Liaison

The Telegraph Hill Dwellers have moved to develop closer relations with other San Francisco neighborhood groups. Our purpose is to increase rapport with organizations and individuals who are sympathetic to our views regarding quality of life in San Francisco.

We have initiated an exchange program with Nob Hill Neighbors, North Beach Neighbors and Russian Hill Neighbors. The program calls for a representative of each group to attend our monthly directors' meetings. We, in turn, will send a representative to their monthly meetings. In addition, we are exchanging newsletters with each group.

This reciprocal endeavor was kicked off at THD's June meeting, which was attended by Dorothy Dana, president of Nob Hill Neighbors, and Beverly Mills, president of Russian Hill Neighbors. Each president outlined the function and structure of her group and discussed key issues facing members.

Nan Roth and Virginia Sletteland were scheduled to attend the July meetings of the Russian Hill and Nob Hill neighborhood groups, respectively.

Another area of neighborhood outreach is THD's participation in the Coalition of San Francisco Neighborhoods (CSFN), an organization composed of approximately 35 neighborhood groups through the city. Sue Cauthen is our delegate to CSFN's monthly meetings.

The Coalition concerns itself primarily with issues of interest to the entire city: e.g., affordable housing, efficient public transportation, and liveable neighborhood environments.

However, it also sends representatives to buttress neighborhood associations' positions at hearings before the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. The Coalition has supported THD stands on a number of important issues.

Current Coalition projects include developing positions on (1) the city's master plan for downtown office construction and (2) the proposed rezoning of neighborhood business districts. Telegraph Hill's interests will be represented when the Coalition testifies before public hearings on these issues in coming months.

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Many thanks to:

- All who worked on our Grant Street Fair booth:
  Gloria Woo
  Marleen Hunn
  France Damon
  Mike & Katie Marsh
  Lyn Clark
  And . . . all the volunteers who helped in the booth.
- Board Member Bill Van Beckum, who organized the Community Meeting on June 27 who (with wife, Kitty) has been an instrumental member of the RAT Patrol. The Van Beckums are moving from the neighborhood. We'll miss their enthusiasm and assistance.
- Those who have helped with recent zoning issues:
  Margaret Gwathney
  Toby Bloxam
  Grace & Rick De Laet
  Jane Osterberg
  Sally & George Yock-Davis
  Jerry Petruzzelli
  Greg & Rosemary Jones
  Nan Roth
  Honor Bulkley
  Mark Hinshaw
  Jim Ricereto
  Jane Winslow
  Chuck Baker
  John Richardson
  (and the many who helped with 1171 Sansome).

Tree Vandalism

There is an ordinance! If you see anyone cutting down a street tree, call Ric Zanoni at the Street Tree Division of Public Works, 558-3376, and find out if they filed a permit application. Cutting trees without a permit is illegal.

Board of Directors' Report

Motions Passed—May 16, 1984

To participate in the Upper Grant Avenue Street Fair.

Motions Passed—June 20, 1984

To give the treasurer discretion to transfer funds between bank accounts, keeping a minimum of $600 as a cash balance.

To request residential space on the second and third floors of 1558 Powell St., and to request the normal setbacks, as well as request a redesign of the front of the building to make it more compatible with other neighborhood buildings.

To take no action against the Elite Cafe, which is proposing to locate in the former Harry Young building on Columbus between Green and Union.

To give discretionary authority to the treasurer to reimburse the president up to $200 a year to attend nonpolitical events on behalf of THD.

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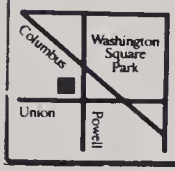

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The Greenwich Street Garden Blooms Again

In 1960, when Maria Pimentell moved across from the garden in the cul de sac of Greenwich, it was a gorgeous riot of color, tended with loving care by two nearby residents. After they were no longer able to take care of the garden, it gradually went to seed, giving Greenwich a shabby, neglected appearance.

Maria retired in 1981, and after a year or so she grew tired of looking out at the chaotic jungle below her apartment. She decided to do something about it, even though she had no garden tools and knew nothing about gardening, except that "weeds have to be pulled." She laughs now as she tells of her embarrassment when asked the name of the few flowers left from the 1960's. She had to admit that she didn't know!

She began her attack on the jungle in the spring of 1982. It took her a year just to clear it out and to put in the steps, and as she put it, "I'm still at it." She has become a familiar sight in her red cap and jeans, often rounding out her day of gardening by picking up all the trash and litter on the sidewalks.

Maria not only devotes her time and energy to beautifying the Greenwich cul de sac, she also spends her own money for tools and countless bags of soil and iron sulphate, which her brother patiently helps her to haul on his infrequent visits to the city.

Another neighbor, Al Aicardi, a native of Telegraph Hill and plumbing inspector for the city, has contributed to the success of the garden and saved Maria countless hours of work by installing the sprinkling system. He was also responsible for obtaining the hydrangeas from the city.

Our appreciation and thanks to Maria Pimentell for her unstinting efforts to add to the beauty of our neighborhood.

Maria Pimentell at work on the Greenwich St. garden (see story opposite page).

DEPARTMENTS

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THD Newsmakers

Board member **Virginia Sletteland**, a seven year Telegraph Hill resident, has taken her long-standing interest in early Ameri[illegible] silver and furniture into a new career, wor[illegible]ing for Argentum antiques. As the past Financial Secretary, Virginia enrolled many new members in THD and increased our presence on the hill. Her goal is to expand THD services to its members and the neighborhood.

Rhoda Robinson, an accountant by training, performs the unenviable task of Financial Secretary. She keeps the membership and dues records for THD's 525 members and provides committee chairpersons with the names of volunteers. This 20-year hill resident lives in a house filled with artifacts and memorabilia that keep visitors constantly swivelling their heads.

Keeping the hill a special place to live and preserving its character so that her son can continue to enjoy her perception of the area's unique qualities, has encouraged **Jane Winslow** to serve on the Citizens' Advisory Committee for Open Space, the Mayor's Committee for the Removal of the Embarcadero Freeway and SPUR, as well as s[illegible]ving a two–year term as THD President. [illegible]s Director of Corporate Personnel Services for Gensler Associates is responsible for running THD, which includes everything from picking up the mail to learning about geological formations on the east slope of the hill.

Do you remember when it seemed that three or more movies were being filmed on the hill at one time, year in and out? In between taking time for her job instructing college English and her interests in sailing, theater, and traveling, **Margaret Gwathmey** has

managed to assist in reducing the congestion caused by filming, so that hill residents are able to attend to their needs in the area. Margaret has also become a bit of a geologist and civil engineer due to her opposition to the 1171 Sansome Street project.

Only a resident of the hill, an area known for its diversity, could play cornet for the Los Trancos Wood Community Marching Band (a regular entrant in the Columbus Day Parade) and be the President of Multiple Shared Services, a business development corporation in the health care industries. But **Richard Winn**, our Treasurer and former chairman of the Residents Against Trash Committee, carries on these diverse activities, as well as preparing THD's annual budget—and paying our bills!

Urban Planner and THD Historian, **Nan Roth,** came to the hill 20 years ago because of its setting, small scale, and urban village quality. She has played an active role in attempting to preserve these attributes and at the same time identify appropriate changes and improvements to neighborhood that would enhance its livability. Her tennis, painting, and lettering take up whatever spare time she has.

Pat Brown, chairperson of the RAT committee and one of our newer members, has undertaken the responsibility of directing THD's efforts to make our streets and open space cleaner through a program of citizen awareness. In addition to trying different local restaurants, Pat finds time to browse through art galleries and do volunteer work at Angel Island.

Jim Ricereto is a 10-year hill veteran who is charged with the responsibility of making sense of the remarks and comments at general membership and board meetings and then recording them for posterity in clear and precise prose as the minutes of the meetings. As an engineer and planner, Jim uses his professional expertise in efforts improve the quality of life on the hill, and to maintain its uniqueness—his reason for residing here.

Board member **Jeanne Milligan's** knowledge of local restaurants has become an asset to THD because she often arranges the dinner meetings. Telegraph Hill's European life style and easy shopping drew her to the neighborhood, along with its proximity to her job as a law office manager. Between holding forth in local coffee houses, Jeanne skis, travels, and indulges her interest in photography.

Tom Havey joined the board this year bringing with him a background in real estate asset management. As past chairman of the crime committee, he developed data which identified areas with higher incidences of crime and the types of crime that occur on the hill. Tom is now turning his attention to preventing high rise office building expansion into the neighborhood.

Leasing executive **Bob Tibbits**, a past president of THD and present Board member, has lived on the hill 12 years, excluding a year's stay in Australia. One of his major concerns is to foster communication between THD members, City Hall, and other organizations so that THD will be able to maintain the neighborhood's structure and keep downtown from expanding toward the hill.

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RSVP: Virginia Sletteland, 781-4352